

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus, comprising:
a shaft;
a scoop, coupled to a distal end of the shaft, for collecting and holding a bolus
5 of a compressible medium, the compressible medium retaining a post-compressed shape; and
a former, coupled to the scoop and mating with the scoop, for molding and
compressing the bolus into a generally spherical ball retained within the scoop.
2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the compressible medium is snow.
3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the scoop and the former include
10 opposing sections of a generally spherical shell.
4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the former includes an open position
relative to the scoop and a closed position relative to the scoop, the former molding the bolus
in the closed position.
5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein said closed position substantially
15 juxtaposes said opposing sections of said shell.
6. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein said closed position mates said
opposing sections of said shell.
7. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the former is biased to the open
position.
8. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the former is operable to the closed
20 position by one-handed manipulation of a proximal end of the shaft.
9. The apparatus of claim 5 further comprising a latching mechanism,
coupled to said former, for inhibiting said former from returning to said open position.

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~~18~~ 7 The apparatus of claim 7 further comprising a release, coupled to said latch, for disengaging said latching mechanism and removing said inhibition of said former.

~~11~~ 9 The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the shaft is arched.

~~12~~ 10 The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the scoop is oriented relative to the shaft such that the generally spherical ball is launchable from the scoop by swinging the shaft through an arc.

~~13~~ 11 The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the shaft includes a ski pole.

~~14~~ 12 The apparatus of claim 11 wherein ski pole includes a snow basket on the first distal end.

~~15~~ 13 The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the scoop is part of the snow basket.

~~16~~ 14 The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the scoop is part of the former.

~~17~~ 15 The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said shaft and said scoop are coupled together using a mating system.

~~18~~ 16 The apparatus of claim 15 wherein said mating system includes a threaded member coupled to one of said shaft and said scoop and a complementary member coupled to one of said shaft and said scoop.

~~19~~ 17 A method for forming a throwable ball, comprising the steps of:
 scooping a bolus of a compressible medium with a scoop coupled to a distal end of a shaft, the compressible medium retaining a post-compressed shape; and
 molding compressively the bolus into the scoop using a former coupled to the distal end, wherein the molding step creates the ball retained in the scoop when a user operates a proximal end of the shaft.

~~20~~ 18 A ball throwing method, comprising the steps of:

scooping a bolus of a compressible medium with a scoop coupled to a distal end of a shaft by a user operating a proximal end of the shaft, the compressible medium retaining a post-compressed shape;

5 molding compressively the bolus into the scoop using a former coupled to the distal end, wherein the molding step creates the ball retained in the scoop without the user touching the former; and

swinging, using the proximal end, the shaft through an arc while the ball is retained by the scoop.

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operating a proximal end of a shaft having a snow object maker coupled to a distal end of the shaft to gather a bolus of snow into the snow object maker, the snow object maker comprising:

15 a scoop, coupled to the distal end, for receiving the bolus into a first concave portion, the first concave portion directed away from an operator when the proximal end is held for operation; and

a former, operatively coupled to the scoop, for compressively molding the bolus into the throwable object by selectively engaging a second concave portion of the former with the bolus received into the first concave portion;

20 molding the bolus into the throwable object by manipulation of the proximal end to operate the former to produce the throwable object in the first concave portion.

2220 25 A method for throwing a snow object, comprising the steps of:
operating a proximal end of a shaft having a snow object maker coupled to a distal end of the shaft to gather a bolus of snow into the snow object maker, the snow object maker comprising:

a scoop, coupled to the distal end, for receiving the bolus into a first concave portion, the first concave portion directed away from an operator when the proximal end is held for operation; and

a former, operatively coupled to the scoop, for compressively molding the bolus into the throwable object by selectively engaging a second concave portion of the former with the bolus received into the first concave portion;

5 molding the bolus into the throwable object by manipulation of the proximal end to operate the former; and

swinging the shaft through an arc by operating the proximal end to launch the throwable object from the first concave portion.

23 21. An apparatus, comprising:

a shaft;

10 a scoop, coupled to a distal end of the shaft, for collecting and holding an object;

a trapper, coupled to said scoop and mating with said scoop, for retaining said object within the scoop when in a closed position, said trapper biased to an open position wherein said object may be collected and/or released; and

15 a latching mechanism, coupled to said trapper, for inhibiting said trapper from returning to said open position.

24 22. The apparatus of claim 21 further comprising a release, coupled to said latching mechanism, for disengaging said latching mechanism and removing said inhibition of said trapper.

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